



CROSS-BORDER SCAMS

The Internet gives buyers access to a world of goods and services, and gives sellers access to a world of customers. Unfortunately, the Internet also gives con artists the very same access. But being on guard online can help you maximize the global benefits of electronic commerce and minimize your chance of being defrauded. OnGuard Online wants you to know how to spot some cross-border scams — including foreign lotteries, money offers, and check overpayment schemes — and report them to the appropriate authorities.

Foreign Lotteries

For years, scam operators have used the telephone and direct mail to entice U.S. consumers into buying chances in supposedly high-stakes foreign lotteries. Now they're using email, too — either to sell tickets or suggest that a large cash prize has your name on it. No matter what country's name is used to promote a lottery, the pitch follows a pattern: you should send money to pay for taxes, insurance, or processing or customs fees. The amount may seem small at first, but as long as you keep paying, the requests for funds will keep coming — for higher and higher amounts. Some victims have lost thousands of dollars.

Most scam operators never buy the lottery tickets on your behalf. Others buy some tickets, but keep the “winnings” for themselves. In any case, lottery hustlers generally try to get you to share your bank account or credit card numbers, so they can make unauthorized withdrawals.

If you're thinking about responding to a foreign lottery, OnGuard Online wants you to remember:

- Playing a foreign lottery is against the law.
- There are no secret systems for winning foreign lotteries. Your chances of getting any money back are slim to none.
- If you buy even one foreign lottery ticket, you can expect many more bogus offers for lottery or investment “opportunities.” Your name will be placed on “sucker lists” that fraudsters buy and sell.
- Keep your credit card and bank account numbers to yourself. Scam artists often ask for them during an unsolicited sales pitch. Once they get your account numbers, they may use them to commit identity theft.

Resist solicitations for foreign lottery promotions. Report them to the appropriate government officials, then hit delete.



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Sample Fraudulent Foreign Lottery Solicitation

Ref : UK/776090X2/23
Batch : 013/05/8394369

WINNING NOTIFICATION:

We happily announce to you the Draw (#942) of the UK NATIONAL LOTTERY, online UK National Lottery program held on 7th January 2006.

Your e-mail address to Ticket Number: 8603775966738 with Serial number 5368/02 drew the Winning Number s:08,14,19,28,29,48,bonus no.06, which subsequently won you the lottery in the 2nd category i.e. match 3 plus bonus.attached.

You have therefore been approved to claim total sum of \$1,628,360.00 (One Million Six Hundred And Twenty Eight Thousand Three Hundred And Sixty Million United States Dollars) in cash credited to file.This is from a total cash prize of \$20,350,000.00,sared amongst the Winners with different amount won in this category sites through computer draw system and extracted from over 100,000 unions, associations, and corporate bodies that are listed online. This promotion takes place weekly.

your lucky winning number falls within our European booklet repre!
tentative office in Europe as indicated in your play coupon. In view of this, your \$1,628,360.00 (One Million Six Hundred And Twenty Eight Thousand Three Hundred And Sixty Million United States Dollars) will be released to you by any of our payment offices in Europe.

Our European agent will immediately commence the process to facilitate the release of your funds as soon as you contact her.For security reasons, you are advised to keep your winning information confidential till your claim is processed and your money remitted to you in whatever manner you deem fit to claim your prize.

This is part of our precautionary measure to avoid double claiming and unwarranted abuse of this program. Please be warned.

To file for your claim,Please contact our Fiduciary Agent for VALIDATION.

Barrister James Jones.
Foreign Services Manager, Payment and Release order
Department,OSA CLAIMS PROCESSING LOTTERY AGENT.
TRANS-ATLANTIC S.A. LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Endeavour to email him your full names,winning numbers,email address,telephone and fax numbers immediately.

Congratulations from me and members of staff of THE UK NATIONAL LOTTERY.
Yours faithfully,
Lynne Branche (Mrs.)
Online Coordinator for THE NATIONAL LOTTERY



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“Nigerian” Foreign Money Offers

The “Nigerian” scam got its name from emails that supposedly came from Nigerian “officials” who needed your help getting at their money — which was tied up due to strife in their country. Today, people claiming to be officials, businesspeople, or the surviving relatives of former government honchos in countries around the world send countless offers via email to transfer thousands of dollars into your bank account if you will just pay a fee or “taxes” to help them access their money. If you respond to the initial offer, you may receive documents that look “official.” But then, you will get more email asking you to send more money to cover transaction and transfer costs, attorney’s fees, blank letterhead, and your bank account numbers, among other information. Subsequent emails will encourage you to travel to another country to complete the transaction. Some fraudsters have even produced trunks of dyed or stamped money to verify their claims.

The emails are from crooks trying to steal your money or commit identity theft. Victims of this scam report that emergencies arise that require more money and delay the “transfer” of funds; in the end, you lose your money, and the scam artist vanishes. According to the U.S. State Department, people who have responded to these solicitations have been beaten, subjected to threats and extortion, and in some cases, murdered.

If you receive an email from someone claiming to need your help getting money out of another country, don’t respond. After all, why would a stranger from another country pick you out at random to share thousands of dollars? Report the solicitation to the appropriate government officials, and then hit delete.



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Sample Fraudulent Foreign Money Offer

From The Desk Of: Dr. JACOB, OSWEGO
The Project Director of the Nigerian National
Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) .
Lagos-Nigeria.

ATTENTION: SIR,

I am Dr. JACOB, OSWEGO ,Project Director and Chairman of the Tender Committee of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) .My Committee is principally concerned with payment of all contract awarded from 1998 to date, in order of priority as regard capital projects of the NNPC. The information we gathered from the Foreign Office of the Nigeria Chambers of Commerce and Industries is so positive as to convince us that you could provide us with solution to a money transfer deal valued at Thirty One Million United States Dollars and subsequently a joint business venture. In the course of our duties as values, and project inspectors for the on-going liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project, we have over-invoiced the value of some jobs done by foreign contractors for the NNPC to the tune of US\$31M. As follows: Computer optimization and Installation \$16,000.000.00 Installation of 250,000.00, Monax Turbine \$10,000.000.00, Turn Around.

Maintenance \$5,000,000.00 Our aim of over-invoicing this payment is to divert the excess amount to a discrete account abroad. This fund is now floating in suspense account at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) . This is the fund my myself and colleagues have decided to transfer into your account since we, as civil servants are not allowed to operate or own foreign account .The money will be shared as follows after transfer: 30% for you (Account Owner) 60% for me and my colleagues, 10% for reimbursement for both local and international expenses that Would be incurred in the course of this transaction. To be able to claim the funds, we will be purporting your name and a company name to be the original contractor/ beneficiary of the funds so that all procedures for international transfer shall be strictly transfer. If this proposal satisfies you, please contact me through , with ,Account number Tel/Fax Telex of bank, with your personal Phone/Fax Numbers for easy communication. This transaction will last for 14 working days from the time we submit the required information, as all modalities concerning this transaction have been worked out and it is completely risk free. Please be informed that this subject is classified sensitive. Therefore treat the transaction with utmost confidentiality and urgency.
Yours Faithfully,

Dr. GODWIN, OBIEGO
The Project Director and Chairman
Tender Committee of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) .
Lagos-Nigeria.



CROSS-BORDER SCAMS

Check Overpayment Schemes

Say no to a check for more than your selling price, no matter how tempting the plea or convincing the story. Check overpayment schemes generally target people who have posted an item for sale online. The con artist, posing as a potential buyer from a foreign country (or a distant part of the U.S.), emails the seller and offers to buy the item with a cashier's check, money order, personal check, or corporate check. Or the scammer may pretend to be a business owner from a foreign country, needing "financial agents" to process payments for their U.S. orders; in exchange, they promise a commission.

Regardless of the cover, here's what happens: The scammer sends you a check that looks authentic — complete with watermarks — made payable for more money than you expected. They ask you to deposit it in your bank account, and then wire-transfer some portion of the funds to a foreign account. They provide convincing reasons why the check is for more than the necessary amount, and why the funds must be transferred quickly. Sometimes, the counterfeit checks fool a bank teller, but be aware that the check still can bounce. The scammer vanishes with the money you wired from your own account and you are on the hook for the entire amount of the worthless check. In addition, a scammer who has your bank account number is likely to use it to withdraw more money from your account.

Reporting a Cross-Border Scam

If you think you may have responded to a cross-border scam, file a complaint at www.econsumer.gov, a project of 20 countries of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (www.icpen.org). Then visit the FTC's identity theft website at www.ftc.gov/idtheft. While you can't completely control whether you will become a victim of identity theft, you can take some steps to minimize your risk.

If you've responded to a "Nigerian" scheme, contact your local Secret Service field office using contact information from the Blue Pages of your telephone directory, or from www.secretservice.gov/field_offices.shtml.

In addition, report telemarketing fraud and check overpayment scams to your state Attorney General, using contact information at www.naag.org.

Report unsolicited email offers to spam@uce.gov — including offers inviting you to participate in a foreign lottery, looking for help getting money out of a foreign country, or asking you to wire back extra funds from a check you received.

If you receive what looks like lottery material from a foreign country through the postal mail, give it to your local postmaster.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Foreign Lottery Scams

U.S. Federal Trade Commission

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit www.ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

Competition Bureau in Canada

The Competition Bureau is an independent law enforcement agency in Canada that investigates anti-competitive practices and promotes compliance with the laws under its jurisdiction. To file a complaint or to get free information, visit www.competitionbureau.gc.ca or call toll-free, 1-800-348-5358. The Bureau has the ability to refer criminal matters to the Attorney General of Canada, who then decides whether to prosecute before the courts.

United Kingdom's Office of Fair Trading

The United Kingdom's Office of Fair Trading is responsible for making markets work well for consumers. They protect and promote consumer interests throughout the United Kingdom, while ensuring that businesses are fair and competitive. To file a complaint or to get free information, visit www.oft.gov.uk or send an email to enquiries@oft.gsi.gov.uk.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission encourages vigorous competition in the marketplace and enforces consumer protection and fair trading laws. To file a complaint or to get more information, visit www.accc.gov.au. The ACCC advocates consultation and negotiation as the first and best option to settle disputes, but once the ACCC pursues legal action any sort of mediation becomes less likely.



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“Nigerian” Advance-Fee Scams

U.S. Secret Service

The Secret Service investigates violations of laws relating to financial crimes, including access device fraud, financial institution fraud, identity theft, and computer fraud. To file a complaint or to get free information, visit www.secretservice.gov or call 202-406-5708.

U.S. Department of State

The Department of State’s mission is to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community. As part of that mission, the Department of State seeks to minimize the impact of international crime, including cross-border internet scams, on the United States and its citizens. To get free information, visit www.state.gov.

U.S. Federal Trade Commission

See above.

OnGuardOnline.gov provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information.

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